

all times be willing to be submissive to His will and not try by every known invention of man to upset it, or rebel against it. "Oh! consistency thou art a jewel."

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### OPINIONS.

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"Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me?" Acts 8:31.

This first question was asked by a man "full of the spirit and of wisdom," to whom the multitudes gave heed with one accord, when they heard him preach the Christ and saw the signs which he did. The second query is a reply to the first, given by an Ethiopian officer who is anxious to discover the true meaning of a certain portion of Scripture, but sees no possible way of doing, except some one shall guide him.

We are all sailing under the same beclouded sky. The Ethiopian found an able teacher, in the person of Philip, the evangelist; but such instructors are not found in our "Intellectual Age."

Perhaps there is no one question so often asked, and so seldom satisfactorily answered—as the query, "Why are there so many different opinions among Christians?" If we can explain why there are differences of opinion among all classes, political and scientific questions, we shall be in possession of some rules which may be applied to religion.

As the effect is similar in these several instances, there must be some similarity in the causes.

In all sciences, such as geology, astronomy etc., we follow guides, and as our guides disagree on some things, we must necessarily disagree as we know nothing except what we have been taught by others. Some information may be derived from experiments, but we being imperfect, our impressions may be wrong. Some things are plainly revealed in the Bible, while others are wrapped in a vale of obscurity.

But it should be remembered that this obscurity is only the stain of sin by which our spiritual eyes are blinded. II Cor. 4:4. If our teachers were of "one mind" and all spoke the same thing, there need be no difference of opinion, but while they teach different theories, difference of opinion is inevitable.

To disparage the Christian religion because its adherents disagree in the interpretation of the Bible, is about as sensible as to denounce all statesmen because they are not a unit in the administration of finance.

Man, in himself, is perfectly helpless, entirely dependent upon his surroundings for information. As our environments are, so will we be, with very few exceptions. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? If you have a peculiar belief, where did you get it? Have you a single idea that you got—*no where*? Have you one single thought which you did not glean from some book, paper or from some person? It is true we have the power to combine or compound different ideas in such away that to some people they may appear to be original with us; but if it were possible for us to analyze them, we would doubtless find their origin to be some where else. Draper, a physiologist of repute, tells us: "There is no such thing as a spontaneous, or self-originated thought. Every intellectual act is the consequence of some preceding act. It comes into existence in virtue of something that has gone before."

Two minds constituted precisely alike and placed under the influence of precisely the same environments must give rise to precisely the same thought.

Some physiologists claim, that every display of energy in the nerve cells causes a change or waste of nervous element which is replaced by nutrition. The character of the waste determines the character of the deposit; and the particle deposited is necessarily endowed according to the particular kind of activity manifested; and this endowment inclines the particle to the same kind of activity. This theory seems to treat man as a mere machine, his thoughts and actions depend upon the past experience and activity, being constantly modified by the society in which he moves. Observation and experience seem to confirm this definition of man. He is simply reaping what he has sown in past life, and will continue to drift with the tide until he exerts himself sufficient to stand upon his own moral nature and assert the independence of his own will. Cutler tells us, "The *will* is the highest energy of which the supreme centres are capable. Within certain limits, the ideas and emotions are subject to its control." It is a rudder placed freely in our hands and with it we can steer wherever we choose. Our minds have not the truth stored away in some secret chamber from which we may draw at pleasure, but in order to possess it must find it. Neither can we receive the truth without appropriate manifestation or revelation.

A revelation is excepted readily, when it concurs with men's wishes; but the understanding, when separated from the inclinations, stops short, and refuses to exert itself.

When a manifestation or revelation ac-

cords with our *will*, it seems very plain and simple; but when it crosses our *will*, or natural inclinations, our understanding refuses to act, and in our ignorance we seek some explanation which is more convenient than expedient.

In some of these entanglements we may discover the secret of discord in religion.

Christ told the Pharisees they could not understand his speech because it was their *will* to do the lusts of satan, and hence, "His words had no free course in them."

As "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, it is natural that we should not see the propriety of obedience in any thing which requires sacrifice or self-denial. Then "they that are in the flesh can not please God."

Nothing but a "Faith working through love" will enable us to see the propriety of "Obedience in all things." "So then belief cometh of hearin, and hearing by the word of Christ. Rom. 10:17.

If belief cometh of hearing, unbelief cometh of hearing also. If belief cometh by hearing or reading the words of Christ, unbelief cometh by hearing or reading the words of those who oppose the words of Christ. "Take heed therefore, whom ye hear," or what you read, for therein lies the secret of belief and unbelief. There seems to be a universal impulse to believe and it is self-fervant that we believe as we have been taught. "Look therefore, carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Eph. 5:15. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it." O, that parents could realize the importance of early training! Are you bringing up your children in the admonition of the Lord?

What are you teaching them, and where are you sending them to school?

If you have done your duty and your whole duty, when they grow up and go forth from your door—you can "Commend them to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build them up and give them the inheritance" with you in that upper and better kingdom, where parting is no more. May God help us all to be dutiful.

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GOD knows what steep places lie before us. He has provided the "shoes of iron and brass," for us to put on. They are truth and honesty and faith, and courage and prayer. A clear conscience will keep the head cool. And up along the hard road there is a sign-board, on which is written in large, bright letters, "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely."—Dr. T. L. Cuyler.